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Read the label not the hype

Are you baffled by what's healthy and what's not? Wherever we turn we are bombarded by information about our diets and our health; functional foods, fortified foods, hidden sugars and hydrogenated fats. I am delighted to see healthy eating hitting the headlines but like any food trend, nutrition is open to abuse by manufacturers keen to jump on the bandwagon and emblazon the latest nutrition buzzword on their packaging - often with little or no benefits. Here is a round up of some of the products which DON'T do what they say on the tin:

1. Breakfast cereal bars.

Claim: Low fat and/or low calorie.

Reality: Packed with sugar to upset energy levels.

Recommended alternative: a sugar free bar made with oats, fruit, nuts and seeds or a bowl of porridge if time.

2. Probiotic health drinks

Claim: Improve digestion and wellbeing.

Reality: Very high in sugar, which in turn depletes your levels of probiotic bacteria!

Recommended alternative: Live natural yoghurt for an unsweetened source of probiotics. Plus eat prebiotic foods which feed the friendly bacteria: garlic, onions, leeks, Jerusalem artichokes, chicory, rye and bananas.

3. Omega 3 enriched products such as margarine and bread

Claim: Added omega 3 for brain and heart health.

Reality: Uses omega 3 from plant sources which are much harder to absorb than omega 3 from oily fish, vastly reducing any possible benefits.

Recommended alternative: Good old fashioned wholemeal bread and butter rather than processed margarine, and eat oily fish two-three times a week.

4. Low fat mayonnaise

Claim: Less fat content than standard version.

Reality: So full of thickeners, fillers, additives and flavours that it barely resembles mayonnaise.

Recommended alternative: Use original mayonnaise but use it less often, and replace some of it with natural yoghurt to reduce the fat content.